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The Local Angle:

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BLACK COUNSELOR HEADS CAREER DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM FOR LABOR DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

WASHINGTON -- Milton Blount, a 33-year-old black, heads a career development program geared to help administrative, clerical and technical personnel of the U.S. Labor Department.

Called "ACT", the program helps full-time employees from the GS 1 to 11 grade levels to improve their job skills and acquire qualifications for higher-level jobs.

"The ACT Program," says Blount, "reflects a strong commitment on the part of the Labor Department to upgrade its employees."

Noting that many of the program participants are members of minority groups and women, he adds, "It also reflects a sincere effort to effectively utilize human resources.

In addition, the program represents for Blount, satisfaction that he's fulfilling a personal commitment.

He recalls that at the height of the Vietnam conflict, when he was with the Armed Forces Examining Service in Denver, he was amazed at the number of youths failing physical and mental tests.

Since both parents and youths often viewed the military as a last chance to get ahead, this final rejection was a great disappointment, he adds.

Blount, a native of Norfolk, Va., never forgot that experience and determined that his civilian career would be devoted to helping people overcome obstacles so they could achieve their full potential in the job of their choice.

Blount, who has been with the Labor Department's career development program since May 1974, describes the ACT Program as "a realistic career development program."

It provides employees at the lower levels a chance to compete for higher-level jobs and also to enter different career areas. But there is no built-in guarantee of immediate advancement, he adds.

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Although concerned that some employees may be discouraged with the lack of immediate career advancement, Blount adds that in his view, it's better for employees to get training and be prepared to take advantage of an opportunity for career advancement.

Blount notes that in his background, most did not go to college. As a high school student, he had planned to enter military service. But thanks to an opportunity in the form of a scholarship, "I discovered there were many more other possibilities for myself." he says.

Blount is a graduate of Hampton Institute, Hampton, Va. His career of helping others overcome obstacles to better jobs includes six years with the U.S. Employment Service for the District of Columbia.

As an interviewer, "I was matching people with jobs." Later, on receiving his Master of Art's degree from Howard University, he was a counselor, helping people overcome physical, mental, social and other problems.

Blount, who once thought his own opportunity was limited, continues to dedicate his efforts to helping others.

In his view, if a person really wants to do interesting, meaningful work, a Labor Department job offers such an opportunity. But the individual must seek ways to make work more interesting and diverse, he adds.

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WORKERS UNDERPAID BY $29 MILLION
IN FIRST QUARTER OF FISCAL 1975

WASHINGTON -- Nearly 138,000 workers protected by federal wage and hour laws were underpaid by $29,200,000 in the first quarter of fiscal 1976, the U.S. Labor Department reported.

Bernard E. DeLury, assistant secretary of labor for employment standards (ESA), said this represents an increase of 31 percent over the same period last year.

DeLury said, "Over $21 million of this year's underpayments to date resulted from federal minimum wage and overtime pay violations under the Fair Labor Standards Act. That means that workers at the bottom of the economic scale suffered the greatest loss."

Also during the first quarter, employers agreed to restore $16,511,857 in back pay to 106,353 employees. Some of this total represents findings made prior to this fiscal year.

Another reason for the difference between the amount found due and the amount actually restored to workers, is the refusal of employers to pay back wages in cases considered by the Labor Department to be unsuitable for litigation. In those instances, employees may institute private suit, but wages recovered in this manner are not reflected in the department's statistics.

The underpayments were discovered during the enforcement activities of ESA's Wage and Hour Division. Most of the remaining $8 million in underpayments resulted from employer violations in the following areas:

-- $4,549,458 to 6,320 employees under the Equal Pay Act, which requires equal pay for men and women doing substantially equal work in the same establishment;

-- $2,136,157 to 750 employees under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, which prohibits employment discrimination against persons ages 40-65; and

-- $1,230,095 to 6,127 employees protected by wage provisions of federal government contracts.

(Note to editors: The 138,000 figure mentioned in the lead paragraph contains some overlap, since some employees were found to be underpaid in violation of two or more provisions of a law.)

# # #

UNDER SECRETARY OF LABOR CITES
PROGRESS IN VETERANS JOB PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON -- Under Secretary of Labor Robert O. Aders said the U.S. Department of Labor is, "Especially concerned with the plight of young unemployed veterans, particularly those who are disabled or members of a minority group.

"This Administration," he added, "is firmly committed to helping all Vietnam-era veterans to qualify for, and obtain, decent jobs."

Under Secretary Aders noted that almost 1.5 million Vietnam-era veterans were placed in jobs, training or education through programs of the federal Interagency Jobs for Veterans Advisory Committee during fiscal year 1975.

He added that this was achieved despite rising unemployement rates for the workforce as a whole.

Other efforts on behalf of veterans cited by Aders at a Veterans Day memorial service include:

-- Establishment of a Labor Department Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with a mandate to coordinate all activities within the department to help veterans and develop new approaches to rewarding civilian careers.

-- Increase in the impact of federal employment-related services to veterans because of work of the Interagency Jobs for Veterans Advisory Committee, headed by the assistant secretary of labor for manpower.

-- Addition of more regional veterans employment representatives to improve the ability of the Labor Department's Manpower Administration to provide jobs and training for veterans.

-- Renewal of a Manpower Administration program for helping blinded veterans obtain jobs and training. The program exceeded its goal for the first year.

(MORE)

Aders also noted that during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1975, federal agency programs to hire veterans and the joint National Alliance of Businessmen and Department of Labor veterans hiring programs generally met their goals.

Adding that state employment service placements, G.I. Bill training and Vietnam-era veteran hiring by federal agencies all exceeded goals for the year, Aders said, "We can be pleased that we are accomplishing results for our veterans."

Aders addressed a traditional Veterans Day memorial service sponsored jointly by the Labor Department, the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Customs Service.

The Washington, D.C., service honored all employees of the sponsoring agencies who have served in the Armed Forces. It was conducted by Department of Labor Post No. 42 of the American Legion, which is commanded by Gordon McNellis.

# # #

REGULATIONS FOR VETERANS' EQUAL JOB OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM PROPOSED BY U.S. LABOR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Labor Department has proposed regulations to explain how employers with federal contracts must take affirmative action to hire and promote Vietnam era and all disabled veterans.

The proposed regulations, published Oct. 22 in the Federal Register, are designed to implement Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974.

This 1974 law clarifies and strengthens the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1972, which required "special emphasis" in employing these veterans.

The law applies to:

-- veterans with a disability compensation of 30 percent or more;

-- veterans discharged for disability incurred in line of duty; and

-- Vietnam era veterans who were not disabled but were discharged (other than dishonorably) within four years from their application for employment. The Vietnam era ended May 7, 1975.

About 2.7 million Vietnam era veterans are covered by the law. About a million disabled veterans are covered.

Over 400,000 of all covered veterans are estimated to be unemployed.

Under the proposed regulations, any employer with a federal contract or subcontract of $50,000 or more and 50 or more employees must have a written affirmative action program for each establishment.

The veterans' affirmative action program is similar to that for the handicapped, administered by the Labor Department under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Goals and time-tables are not required in either program; however, contractors must use special affirmative action methods.

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Comments on the proposed regulations should be submitted to Bernard E. DeLury, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment Standards, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C., before December 8, 1975.

Affirmative action provisions of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 are administered by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs in the Labor Department's Employment Standards Administration.

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EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR MIGRANT, SEASONAL FARMWORKERS
RECEIVE $4.9 MILLION FROM U.S. LABOR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON -- Secretary of Labor John T. Dunlop has announced grants of more than $4.9 million to 17 colleges to educate migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents.

The programs--High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) -- are being conducted at educational institutions in California, Colorado, Florida, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin and Puerto Rico.

Participants in HEP reside at colleges and universities while being helped to pass the General Educational Development (GED) test. The GED high school equivalency diploma qualifies them for further education, on-the-job training, or a job.

CAMP operates with universities and colleges to provide tuition assistance, tutoring, and counseling for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents.

To qualify for either program, trainees must meet federal income poverty guidelines. For example, a family of four in a rural area with an income of $4,300 or less would meet the poverty guidelines.

Both programs are funded under Title III (Special Federal Responsibilities) of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA).

Following is a list of grantees, the estimated amount each will receive and the type of grant:

GRANTEE	AMOUNT	TYPE OF GRANT
Catholic University of Puerto Rico	$ 260,227	HEP
University of Miami, Fla.	296,940	HEP
University of Wisconsin	279,661	HEP
Eastern New Mexico University	294,904	HEP
New Mexico Technical/Vocational School	260,407	HEP
Pan American University, Tex.	286,505	HEP
Pan American University, Tex.	237,597	CAMP

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GRANTEE	AMOUNT	TYPE OF GRANT
St. Edwards University, Tex.	303,856	CAMP
University of Houston, Tex.	269,376	HEP
University of Texas at El Paso, Tex.	281,560	HEP
Nebraska Human Resources Foundation	302,145	HEP
Adams State College, Colo.	202,848	CAMP
Southern Colorado State College	265,846	CAMP
California Polytechnic State University	323,969	HEP
San Diego State University	246,922	CAMP
University of Pacific, Calif.	270,355	HEP
University of Oregon	290,074	HEP
Washington State University	267,556	HEP
TOTAL:	$4,940,748	

# # #

MINIMUM SALARY SCALES FOR POLICE, FIREFIGHTERS
IN LARGE CITIES INCREASE DURING YEAR, BLS REPORTS

WASHINGTON -- Minimum salary scales for firefighters in 153 large cities increased an average of 7.0 percent from January 1974 to January 1975, compared with 6.1 percent from 1973 to 1974.

The increase in police minimum scales in the same cities averaged the same in both years--6.2 percent.

Increases in maximum scales averaged higher during 1974 than 1973 for both occupations, however, at 7.9 percent for firefighters and 7.2 percent for police, compared with 6.5 and 6.3 percent, respectively, during the previous year.

These data are part of a study released today by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Minimum salary scales for police and firefighters combined in January 1975 averaged 6.5 percent above the January 1974 levels, and maximum scales were 7.5 percent higher.

The average minimum annual salary during the first 12 months of employment for police was $11,162 in January 1975, compared with $10,717 for firefighters. Maximum salaries averaged $14,001 and $13,231, respectively. The indexes of maximum salary scales, as a result of the increases, were 179 (1967=100) for police and 180 for firefighters in January 1975.

The study, covering 153 cities having populations of 100,000 or more, combined information compiled by the International City Management Association, supplemented by surveys of salaries and working conditions conducted by the Fraternal Order of Police and the International Association of Fire Fighters, as well as direct inquiries by the Bureau.

From January 1974 to January 1975, percentage increases in both minimum and maximum scales were largest in the South and lowest in the Northeast. Both minimum and maximum annual salary levels, however, continued to be highest in the West and lowest in the South.

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Average salary levels generally continued to vary directly with the population size of the city. For both police and firefighters, cities with inhabitants of over 999,999 had the highest annual scales. On the average, salary levels were smallest in cities of 100,000 to 249,999.

The increases in average minimum scales for firefighters and police over the January 1970 - January 1975 period were 35.0 and 33.5 percent, respectively, increasing at annual rates of 6.2 and 5.9 percent. Maximum scales advanced by about the same amount for the two groups -- 41.1 percent for firefighters and 40.9 percent for police -- an annual rate of 7.1 percent for each group.

The annual rate of increase in salaries for federal employees under the General Schedule over the 1970 - 75 period averaged 5.4 percent. In private enterprise, salaries of white-collar employees and hourly earnings of production and nonsupervisory workers in the nonfarm economy increased at annual rates ranging from 6.1 to 7.2 percent between 1970 and 1975. The annual rate of increase in the Consumer Price Index over this 5-year period was 6.6 percent.

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MAJOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SETTLEMENTS,
FIRST 9 MONTHS OF 1975

WASHINGTON -- Major collective bargaining settlements reached during the first 9 months of 1975 generally provided for larger wage increases than agreements negotiated during all of 1974, according to preliminary estimates issued by the U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Wage-rate adjustments negotiated during the first 9 months of 1975 averaged 10.3 percent for the first contract year and 7.8 percent annually over the live of the contract, compared with 9.8 percent (first year) and 7.3 percent (over the life) in all of 1974. These measures exclude possible gains under "cost-of-living" escalator (COLA) clauses.

The 1975 data relate to 612 collective bargaining settlements, covering 2.4 million workers. These settlements were concluded primarily in the construction,railroad, apparel, and wholesale and retail trade industries.

Other key features of the contracts reached during the first 9 months of 1975 include:

Wage and benefit gains combined, in contracts covering 5,000 workers or more, averaged 11.0 percent for the first year and 7.9 percent annually over the life of the contract. This compares with 10.7 and 7.8 percent, respectively, in 1974.

Contracts concluded during 1975 had an average duration of 27.2 months, compared with 22.5 months when these same contracts were previously negotiated. First-year gains were greater than those deferred to subsequent years and their size tended to increase as contract duration grew. Second and third year adjustments and average adjustments over the life of the contract had no consistent relationship with contract duration, however.

In the manufacturing sector, wage-rate adjustments averaged 10.0 percent in the first contract year and 8.2 percent annually over the life of the contract. Comparative adjustments in 1974 were 8.7 and 6.1 percent.

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In nonmanufacturing, adjustments averaged 10.4 percent in the first year and 8.9 percent annually over the life of the contract, compared with 10.5 and 8.0 percent, respectively, in 1974.

Settlements in the construction industry averaged 7.9 percent for the first year and 7.4 percent annually over the life of the contract, compared with 11.0 and 9.6 percent for 1974.

The size of settlements appears to have been influenced by the possibility of additional increases under escalator clauses. Contracts containing escalator clauses, covering 34 percent of the workers under major settlements concluded during the first 9 months of 1975, provided for annual wage-rate adjustments of 7.2 percent; contracts without escalator clauses provided for annual adjustments averaging 8.2 percent. These compare with gains of 6.1 and 9.1 percent, respectively, in 1974.

For those contracts reached during the first 9 months of 1975 containing COLA provisions, gains thus far have averaged 13.2 percent when "cost-of-living" adjustments are added to first-year negotiated increases.

During the first 9 months of 1975, new escalator provisions were adopted in 76 settlements, covering 586,000 workers, primarily in the railroad industry. Escalator clauses now cover approximately 58 percent (5.9 million) of all workers in major bargaining units.

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COURT ORDERS BACK PAY
IN JOB SAFETY DISCRIMINATION CASE

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. District Court, Lincoln, Neb., has ordered Morrison-Knudsen, Inc., Boise, Idaho, to give back pay with interest to five of the company's Sutherland, Neb., workers who had been discharged after they walked off their jobs because of hazardous working conditions, the U.S. Department of Labor has announced.

Local 205, Laborers International Union of North America assisted the five in working with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to resolve the case.

In a judgment filed recently by the court, without contest by the company, Morrison-Knudsen was permanently enjoined and restrained from violating provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, that protect employees against discrimination for exercising their rights under the act.

The company also was directed to post a notice at its Boise headquarters and in the company safety newsletter to the effect that it will not discharge employees for filing complaints about safety or health conditions.

The case arose from an incident at a railroad siding near Sutherland in October 1973. Five employees of the company were unloading large pieces of rock from railroad hopper cars in winds gusting up to 40 mph. The employees claimed they could not see, had difficulty breathing in the dust-filled work area, and were fearful of injury due to the poor visibility. They were unsuccessful in their attempts to have the conditions corrected, so they left the jobsite, returning home for the rest of the day. They were informed later they had been discharged.

Rules of the department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recognize that occasions can arise where employees are confronted with a choice between not performing assigned work and subjecting themselves to conditions which are likely

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